

# REBECCA COHN eNEWSLETTER

for the twenty-fourth Assembly District

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## Cohn's Comment



April 24 marks the beginning of California Holocaust Memorial Week. As the author of the Assembly Resolution declaring the week's observance, I will preside over an Assembly Floor Ceremony that will bring together the largest group of Holocaust Survivors ever honored by the State Legislature.

When I first came to the Assembly, Holocaust Memorial Week was quietly acknowledged. In truth, I felt it was not receiving the type of serious reflection it merited. I considered it my duty to create a meaningful event to honor the many ordinary people who went through extraordinary circumstances that now live in California.

As a result, I created a project to capture the stories of Holocaust Survivors to pass on their knowledge and to coincide with the event. I began working with Congregation Beth David and the South Bay Holocaust Survivor Group in my district to facilitate high school students in interviewing and writing essays about Holocaust Survivor experiences. The first booklet in 2003 had ten stories published. The following year we collected twenty-one stories. Last year, we expanded our own partnerships and included the stories and essays from five other Assembly Member's offices and compiled thirty-one accounts. This year, fifteen other Assembly Members are participating. All together we have collected eighty-one stories from Holocaust Survivors. The essay collection has been included in libraries of the Museum of

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## District Calendar

### Earth Day Creek Clean Up

Saturday, April 22, 2006

10:00 AM to 1:00 PM

Meet at Old Almaden Road between Foxworthy & Almaden Expressway (street parking is available on Old Almaden)

Please come out and celebrate Earth Day and help keep Guadalupe River clean.

For more information contact Mark Vanni at (408) 282-8920 or [Mark.Vanni@asm.ca.gov](mailto:Mark.Vanni@asm.ca.gov) ♦

## Public Safety Bills Pass Assembly, Move to Senate

SACRAMENTO – Key bills from Assemblymember Rebecca Cohn's legislative packaged have passed through the Assembly and are being heard by committees in the Senate. The legislation covers issues ranging from protecting the victims of domestic violence to ensuring students have emergency preparedness training.

The following bills have passed the Assembly and are awaiting hearing in the Senate Committee on Public Safety, unless otherwise noted. Assembly Floor votes are in parenthesis.

### AB 44 – Cell Phone

**Destruction:** Increases the penalty for the destruction of or the obstruction of the use of a cell phone during an assault to one year in jail. (77-0).

### AB 96 – GPS for High Risk

**Sex Offenders:** Mandates minute-by-minute tracking of high risk sex offenders from the time they are paroled to the time they register with local law enforcement. (72-0).

### AB 105 - Victims

**Compensation Fund (VCF)**

**Moving Allocation:** Clarifies that the VCF relocation benefit

for domestic violence, stalking and sexual assault victims can be used more than once as long the benefit does not exceed the \$2000 limit. (72-0).

### AB 167 – Electronic

**Harassment:** Makes it a misdemeanor to contact someone two or more times with the intent to harass or annoy them, regardless of how the contact is made. (73-0).

**AB 828 – Judicial Review of Public Records:** Would create an exception to allow judges to consider police reports during arraignment to decide if a protective order should be issued. (77-0).

### AB 1787 – Protective Orders,

**Stalking:** This bill seeks to clarify existing law to ensure that only emergency protective orders issued by a judicial officer are valid. (71-0).

### AB 103 – School Emergency

**Preparedness:** Requires emergency preparedness training for students to include to earthquake, fire, flood, and tsunami. (73-0). To be heard in the Senate Committee on Education.

### AB 1112 – Disabled Parking:

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Tolerance in Los Angeles, in Israel's Holocaust museum Yad Vashem and the United States Holocaust Museum in Washington D.C.

As the essay collection has grown, so has the ceremony. Initially, a few Survivors were invited to observe the ceremony. I invited Survivors from my district to attend the ceremony at the Capitol and be honored on the Assembly Floor. Last year, Survivors sat alongside Assembly Members at their desks. Since I have presided over the ceremony, a Survivor has given a keynote address to the entire Assembly describing their experiences during the Holocaust and encouraging others to continue the work of the project.

I have been honored with the opportunity to create, sustain and grow this project. As it is my final year in the Assembly, I feel confident that my fellow Assembly Members will continue to embrace the vision of the project and of California Holocaust Memorial Week. I am touched that the stories of so many Survivors have been passed on to the next generation. Surely, it is a lesson they will never forget and they will oppose tyranny, oppression and genocide in all of its forms and work for a day when we can say this will never happen again.

— REBECCA COHN

[Assemblymember.Cohn@assembly.ca.gov](mailto:Assemblymember.Cohn@assembly.ca.gov)

You can read the previous essay collection at Assemblymember Cohn's homepage at <http://democrats.assembly.ca.gov/members/a24/>. For more information on the California Memorial Week ceremony, contact Gabe Gopen at (408) 282-8920 or [Gabe.Gopen@asm.ca.gov](mailto:Gabe.Gopen@asm.ca.gov). ♦

## Cohn Honors Woman of the Year

SACRAMENTO – Assemblymember Rebecca Cohn honored Olivia Soza-Mendiola as “Woman of the Year” for Assembly District 24 in a ceremony at the Capitol on Monday, March 20.

The day began with a breakfast reception hosted by Lieutenant Governor Cruz Bustamante for the honorees and their guests. Ms. Soza-Mendiola sat with Assemblymember Cohn at her desk for the Assembly floor session and the “Woman of the Year” ceremony. First Lady Maria Shriver presided over the event. Following the ceremony, honorees and their guests were taken on a tour of the Capitol provided by the Capitol Museum Tours. Finally, the day's festivities concluded at the California State Museum for a reception and a viewing of the “Woman of the Year” exhibit.

Since 1975, Soza-Mendiola has dedicated her career to working in the non-profit sector.

With limited college experience, Ms. Soza-Mendiola was employed by the Mexican American Community Services Agency (MACSA), a non-profit

community based organization where she began as a program specialist tutoring children after school. After twenty-two years of service at MACSA she has worked her way up to become the agency's Chief Executive Officer. Her involvement includes participation in

numerous taskforces, panels, committees, collaborative ventures and boards. Ms. Soza-Mendiola has led the designing and implementation of exemplary award winning services such as the Male Involvement Program that focuses on providing men with the tools and skills needed to become active members in the community and role models for their children. This program was recognized by the Clinton White House Administration as an exemplary program in 1998. ♦



Cohn and Soza-Mendiola with Speaker Fabian Nunez



Cohn presents a resolution at the Students Recycling Used Technology competition to Cliff Monroe and Rendee Dore with Kevin Moore, the Vice Mayor of Santa Clara. The event challenged students to make useful devices out of discarded electronics and computer parts. ♦

## Save the Bay Asks for Community Input

Are you polluting the Bay? Pollution from our homes, cars, and neighborhoods is one of the greatest threats to San Francisco Bay. Take Save The Bay's Keep It Clean! survey at [www.ikeepitclean.org](http://www.ikeepitclean.org) today to learn how you may be polluting the Bay and to

make some easy changes to help keep the Bay healthy for future generations. ♦





# Commute Alternatives Can Save More Than Money

SAN JOSE – Commute traffic is more than an annoyance in the Bay Area. Congestion on the highways is a drain on the economy, adversely affects air quality and reduces time spent with our families. There are several ways to reduce the time you spend in traffic and to improve your quality of life and overall wellbeing of the area.

Modifying how you travel to work can save money and gasoline. Fuel can be saved by combining errands with the daily commute. Leaving earlier in the morning or later in the evening can also reduce fuel burned in bumper-to-bumper traffic.

While many families use carpools to share the load of getting children around, few adults consider this option for themselves. Starting a carpool can be as easy as talking to neighbors who travel to the same destination or posting a notice on a company or school bulletin board.

If you form a carpool, keep the following points in mind:

- Establish who will drive and when
- Agree on how riders will share expenses.
- Determine routes and pickup points—either at homes or more central locations.

- Agree on how long the driver will wait for a tardy passenger.
- Decide if eating, drinking, or music will be permitted.
- Check with your insurance provider to see if you need to alter your coverage or if there is a discount for driving less.

Try the carpool for a week and use that time to deal with any problems.

For more tips on how to do your part to save time, money, and our environment on your commute, contact Mark Vanni at (408) 282-8920 or [Mark.Vanni@asm.ca.gov](mailto:Mark.Vanni@asm.ca.gov). ♦



Interns Leslie Jaw and Helen Segal with Assemblymember Cohn. To learn about internship opportunities in the district office, contact Tori Ueda at (408) 282-8920 or [Tori.Ueda@asm.ca.gov](mailto:Tori.Ueda@asm.ca.gov). ♦

## Eight of Cohn's Bills Reach Senate

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Allows permitted disabled to park in any available parking space regardless of visible, posted permitting requirements, except for those individually reserved or on private property. (69-1). To be heard in the Senate Committee on Transportation and Housing.

For more information, contact Richard Woonacott at (916) 319-2024 or [Richard.Woonacott@asm.ca.gov](mailto:Richard.Woonacott@asm.ca.gov). ♦

## Learning Life Saving Tips from a Twice Saved Man

SAN JOSE – It is a rarity to hear a dead man speak, but how about someone who died twice? Assemblymember Rebecca Cohn's district staff, along with representatives from Senator Alquist and Assemblymember Coto's offices, had the opportunity to do just that. Cardiac arrest survivor Dwight Mensinger described being declared dead twice and how his life was saved. The staffers participated in a session that certified them in CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) and in the use of an AED (automated external defibrillator). The clinic was taught by Captain Sebastian Wong of the San Francisco Fire Department and Karen Robertson Strain of the American Heart Association (AHA).

The CPR training involved watching a demonstration video, and then practicing the techniques on special mannequins. Passing a written exam earned the staffers "Heartsaver" certification. Cohn encouraged her staffers to undergo the training to become educated about the issues surrounding heart disease.

Mr. Mensinger recounted how he experienced chest pains at work and collapsed. He was saved by a knowledgeable and brave co-worker. He believes that many more lives can be saved by having AEDs readily available, such as in police vehicles and in schools. An AED is a portable electronic device which establishes a constant heart rhythm after sudden cardiac arrest. States such as Nevada require AEDs in every high school.

If you or your organization would like to find out more about CPR classes, go to the website for the AHA at [www.heart.org](http://www.heart.org) and click on "CPR and ECC." ♦

## April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month

SAN JOSE – Sexual violence is a serious problem that affects millions of people every year. Though the available data greatly underestimates the true magnitude of the problem, the figures are still startling.

- In 2002, only 39% of rapes and sexual assaults were reported to law enforcement officials.
- Among high school students nationwide, 9% reported that they had been forced to have intercourse.
- Among college students nationwide, between 20% and 25% of women

reported being victims of rape or attempted rape.

- Among adults nationwide, one in six women and one in thirty-three men reported suffering rape or attempted rape at some point in their lives.

Sexual violence can have very harmful and lasting

consequences for victims, families and communities. Talk to your friends and loved ones, as no one deserves to be abused. If you or someone you know is or has been a victim of rape or sexual assault, call the YWCA Rape Crisis Center's 24 hour hotline at (408) 287-3000. Help is available. ♦